

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

1. Name of Property

Historic name: Baño Grande

Other names/site number: Piscina de La Mina, La Piscina, FS# 08160000014, CNF-06-01

Name of related multiple property listing:

New Deal Era Constructions in the Forest Reserves in Puerto Rico, 1933 – 1942

2. Location

Street & number: PR191, Km 11.85

City or town: Rio Grande State: PR County: Rio Grande

Not For Publication: ☐ Vicinity: ☒

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this X nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property X meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

 national X statewide local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

X A B X C D

Signature of certifying official

Date

TONY TOOKE

Regional Forester, Southern Region (Region 8), USDA Forest Service

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official:

Date

CARIANGELI LEÓN MORAZA

State Historic Preservation Officer - Puerto Rico State Historic Preservation Office

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

___ entered in the National Register

___ determined eligible for the National Register

___ determined not eligible for the National Register

___ removed from the National Register

___ other (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

Private:

☐

Public – Local

☐

Public – State

☐

Public – Federal

☒

Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

Building(s)

☐

District

☐

Site

☐

Structure

☒

Object

☐

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	buildings
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	sites
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
<u>2</u>	<u>0</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

Recreation and Culture/Outdoor Recreation

Current Functions

Recreation and Culture/Outdoor Recreation

7. Description

Architectural Classification

Craftsman style
International style

Materials:

Principal exterior materials of the property: Stone and Concrete

Narrative Description

Summary Paragraph

Baño Grande pool (Figure 1) is a stone masonry semicircular pool with an adjacent reinforced concrete rectangular bathhouse constructed on an unnamed creek at kilometer 11.85 on road PR191, Jiménez ward on the Rio Grande Municipality, within the El Yunque National Forest (Figure 2). The pool was created on the causeway of an existing creek, with a stone masonry dam at one end (east) and a concrete and stone masonry bridge at the other end (west). Adjacent to the bridge a set of stairs leads up to the *International Style* reinforced concrete bathhouse building located over a small flat area to the southwest of the pool. Built in the late 1930's by the Civilian Conservation Corp (CCC), this complex is the largest and most impressive manmade swimming pool in La Mina Recreational Area. The pool was in continuous use from 1936 to 1968 when it was closed to swimmers, and turned into a scenic spot instead. The pool is one of the best preserved examples of the early New Deal era concrete and masonry construction left in Puerto Rico. At present Baño Grande is the most visited CCC era historic structure in the forest. The property is in extremely good condition and retains a high level of integrity of location design, materials, workmanship and association. No significant damages or alterations have happen which could detract from its eligibility under criteria A and C for association to the CCC/"New Deal" historic period and architectural styles.



Figure 1. Baño Grande (towards the southwest).

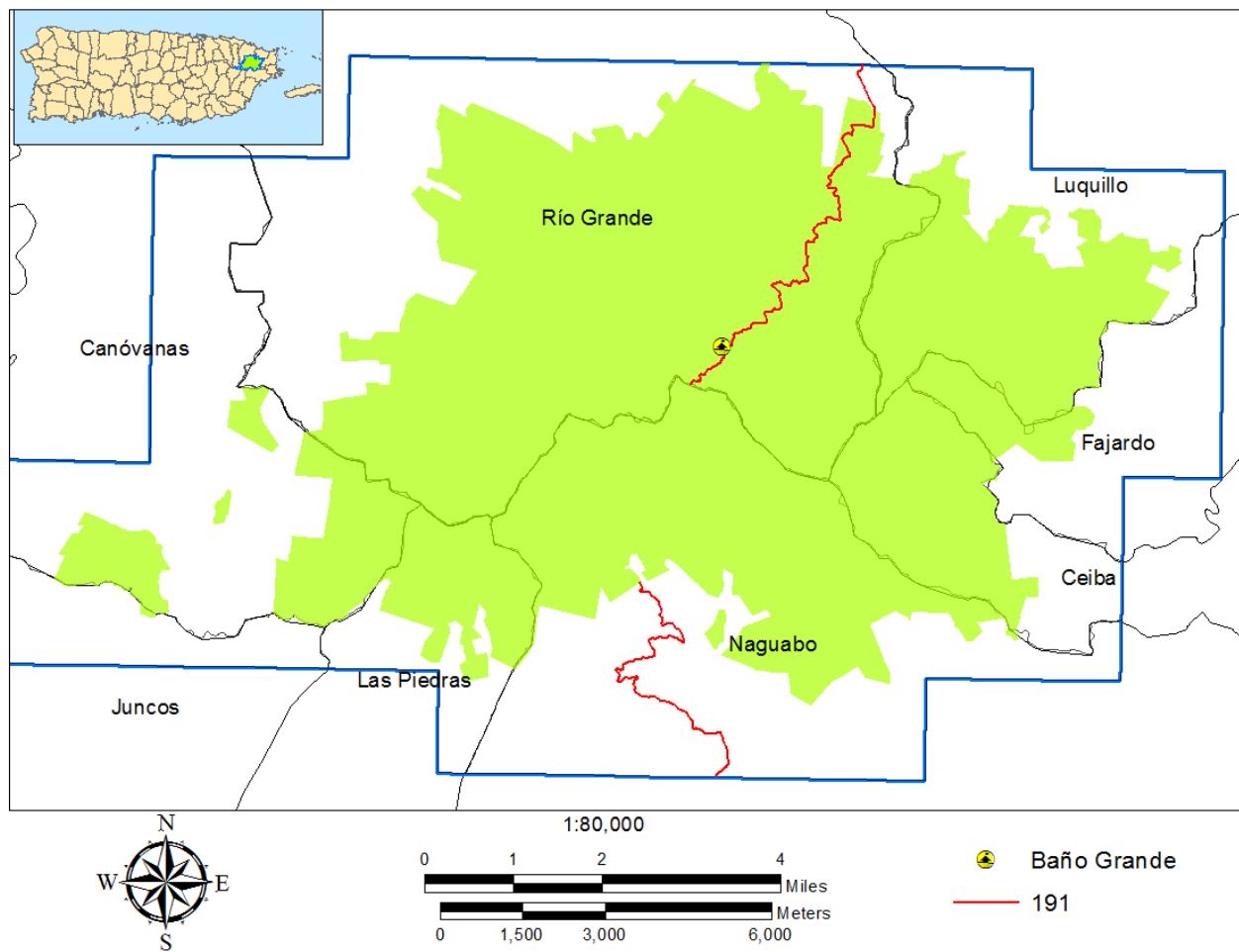


Figure 2. Location of the property (El Yunque National Forest Boundary Map).

Narrative Description

Physical Location: The **Baño Grande** pool is located on the northeastern part of the island in the mountainous zone of La Sierra de Luquillo along State Road PR-191, near Km. 11.85, within the boundaries of the El Yunque National Forest, in the Municipality of Rio Grande, Puerto Rico (Figure 3). The property was constructed in an unnamed creek (a branch of La Mina River) some 25 meters to the northwest of State Road PR-191. The site is located within the Palo Colorado Recreation Area (formerly called La Mina Recreation Area). The recreation area parking lot is located 27 meters to the southeast of the pool area. The property can be accessed by hiking uphill for 20 meter on the cobblestone stairway leading to the pool site, starting from the El Yunque Hiking Trail head next to PR-191.

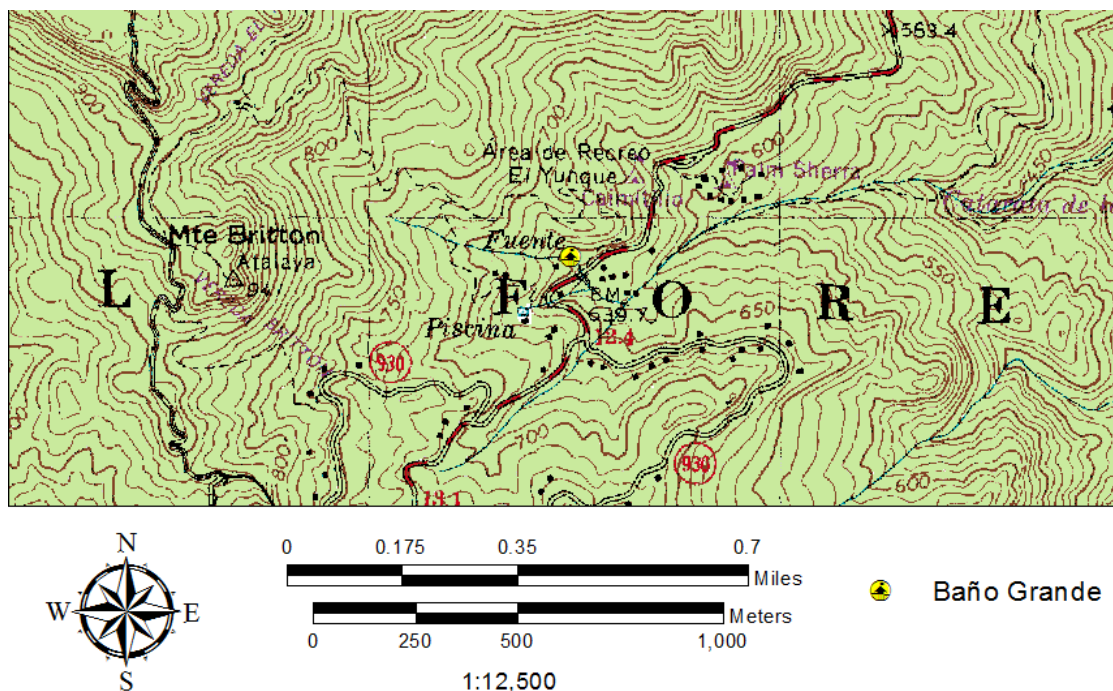


Figure 3. Location of the property in relation to the PR191 recreation area (El Yunque USGS Quadrangle).

Environmental Setting:

The property is located in the upper elevations of the El Yunque National Forest (650 meters above sea level), just west of State Road PR-191, across the Palo Colorado Recreation Area parking lot, which is located 27 meters to the southeast of the pool. The property can be accessed by hiking uphill for 20 meter on the cobblestone stairway leading to the pool site, starting from the El Yunque Hiking Trail head next to PR-191. The property is located within the boundaries of the Mature Palo Colorado montane cloud wet forest and is surrounded by lush tropical vegetation distinctive of this environmental setting. The property itself was built on the bed of an unnamed creek which is part of the La Mina River watershed.

Physical Characteristics:

Baño Grande is composed by an ensemble of two distinctive features; (1) the ovoid shaped pool with associated cobbled walkaways, masonry access stairs and an arched bridge and (2) the concrete bathhouse.

Pool and arched bridge

The pool (Figure 4) can be accessed from PR-191 via the El Yunque Trail head. The trail leads north towards a set of 15 concrete and rock steps which connect the trail to the pool. A masonry retaining wall extends from the El Yunque Trail along the northern side of the steps, towards the east, until reaching the concrete landing at the entrance of the pool. The pool's containment area, measuring 24.4 meters east to west by 25.6 meters north to south, is formed by a polygonal uncoursed stone masonry dam located on the eastern side. The dam measuring 17 meter in height and 9.7 meters in width extends all the way from the northern to the southern banks of the creek.

The dam tapers towards the top from a width of 5 meter at the bottom to 1.2 meters on the top. Water cascades from the pool over the dam towards the creek bed below. A reinforced concrete walkway extends over the length of the dam elevated half a meters over it on twelve square concrete pillars (six at each side) protruding from the top of the levy (Figure 5). The dam presents a square drainage opening at the bottom center near the foot of the dam, from where the pool can be drained by the opening of a steel sluicgate, operated via a rotating screw valve, accessible from the concrete walkway on top of the dam (Figure 6). The eastern side of the dam presents concrete pillars with galvanized steel tube railing which are part of the original design.



Figure 4. General view of the pool (towards the southwest).



Figure 5. View of the masonry dam and elevated concrete walkway (towards the west).

From both sides of the concrete walkway on top of the dam extend two flagstone trails that shore what once were the northern and southern banks of the unnamed creek. This forms a continual walkway, which in junction with the dam, creates the pool area. Both the northern and southern flagstone trails are lined with squared shape concrete drainages (Figure 7) which empty into the creek bed to the southeast. The northern drainage is the longest measuring 57.6 meters in length while the one on the southern walkway only measure 26.8 meters in length. Located on front of the drainage, along the northern walkways there are five concrete benches without backrests (which are not part of the original design).

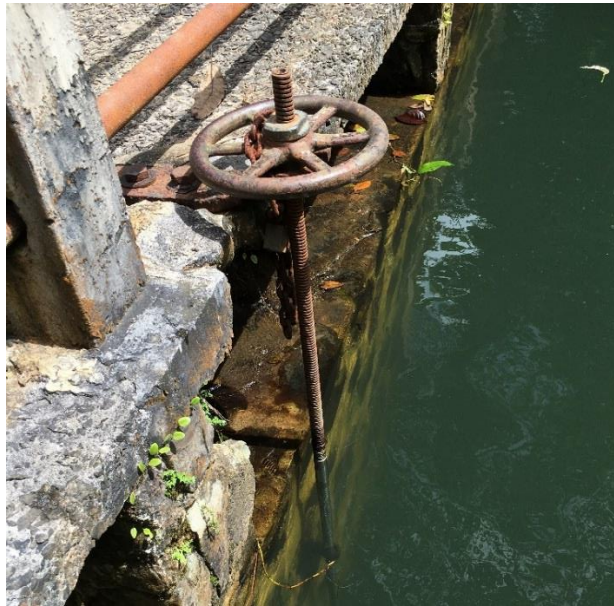


Figure 6. Sluiceway valve (towards the southeast)



Figure 7. View of southern walkway drainage (towards the southwest).

Located on the southern side of the pool there is an original concrete drinking fountain (no longer operational) and a later era concrete bench (Figure 8). All around the pool extends a railing of galvanized steel tubing supported by concrete pillars which was installed after the closing of the pool in the late 1960's (Figure 9).



Figure 8. View of original drinking fountain and later addition concrete bench (towards the southwest).



Figure 9. View of railing extending around the pool's edge (towards the northwest).

The flagstone trails converge at an arched concrete bridge with stone facing on the western side of the pool. A stone retaining wall extends along the southwestern side of the pool, shoring up the flat area where the bathhouse is located and stabilizing a few of the boulders left in place during construction (Figure 10).

The bridge (Figure 11) measures 11.10 meters in length with a width of 2.05 meters and an elevation of 2.4 meters from the water's level. It is formed by the presence of four square pylons (two at each extreme) with four flagstone lined steps (on the northern end) which lead to the arched walking surface also lined with flagstones. The bridge is built from reinforce concrete with a polygonal uncoursed facing of stone, possibly to maintain a continuation of the construction style of the dam and walkways. The wooden mold imprints of the timber used on the poured concrete construction are still visible on the underside of the arched bridge.

The bridge connects both the northern and southern walkways on the western side of the pool. The bridge also gives direct access from the north side towards the elevated plateau where the bathhouse is located (to the southwest).



Figure 10. View of the masonry retaining wall to the south of the pool (southern walkway) (towards the southwest).



Figure 11. View of the concrete arched bridge (towards the west).

Bathhouse

The current bathhouse house (Figure 12) is located on a small flat terrace adjacent to the southwestern corner of the pool. It consists of a flat roofed, reinforce concrete building constructed on the International Style. It has a volume 16.5 meters long by 5.6 meters in width and an elevation of 3.6 meters (12 feet).



Figure 12. View of the bathhouse (towards the southeast).

A 5.5 meter wide flat roof portico extends in front of the central entrance bay. The bathhouse is accessed by 12 stone steps (Figure 13) leading south from the southern exit of the arched bridge. It can also be accessed through the southern cobbled walkway via four stone steps located next to the stone retaining wall. Those four steps lead to a small square platform which joins the 12 stone steps to the bridge.



Figure 13. Bathhouse access stairway (towards the south).

The main façade (northern façade) of the bathhouse consists of a central entrance bay, covered by a projecting, concrete portico with a flat roof, flanked by two horizontal, running window openings, one on each side of the portico which present glass bricks and which are currently boarded with plywood. The rectangular central doorway has plain, concrete surround moldings and house board and batten double doors, each with a small hatch-window (Santiago-Cazul, 1998) (Figure 14). Opposite to the portico, the southern façade (back side) also presents a running window with a double row of glass bricks. The eastern and western façades of the structure each present a two square window openings with glass bricks.



Figure 14. View of central doorway (towards the south).

A projecting eave at roof level continues around the building and defines the northern façade, projecting forward over the central bay and creating an entrance portico. Two rectangular concrete pillars support the (north) extreme end of the portico, one at each corner. A solid concrete parapet above the eave crowns the composition. An ascending frontispiece composed of two steps on each side, projects above the parapet at center, highlighting the central entrance bay and straightening the symmetrical composition (Santiago-Cazul, 1998).

The interior of the building is divided in three volumes. The central volume located directly behind the central doorway constitutes the entrance bay which served as the original foyer for the building. Extending into the east and west wings were the bathroom areas, females to the right of the entrance and male to the left (Figure 15). The back and lateral walls on each bathroom presents two horizontal, running window openings with glass bricks. The interior of the each wing are tiled with square green tiles and modern toilets and bathroom fixtures (Figure 16). Both the bathroom fixtures and tiles are not original to the structure dating possibly to the late 1960's to the late 1970's. The ceiling of the central volume presents two square skylight openings, while the side volumes each present a rectangular skylight opening at the center of the room. The lateral and the façade present a layer of cement stucco, probably added in the 1950's to 1960's. The back walls present the béton brut surface original to the construction of the building. No documentation of the alterations could be located on record.

The property retains integrity of location design, materials, workmanship and association. No significant damages or alterations have happen which could detract from its eligibility under criteria A and C for association to the CCC/"New Deal" historic period and architectural styles.



Figure 15. View of bath house central volume (looking towards the exit).



Figure 16. View of ladies bathroom.

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register Listing.)

- ☒ A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- ☐ B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☒ C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ☐ D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

- ☐ A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- ☐ B. Removed from its original location
- ☐ C. A birthplace or grave
- ☐ D. A cemetery
- ☐ E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- ☐ F. A commemorative property
- ☐ G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

Areas of Significance

Architecture

Entertainment/Recreation

Period of Significance

1936-1968

Significant Dates

1936

1938
1968

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Civilian Conservation Corps

R.E. Pidgeon

H. Randolph

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph

Baño Grande is statewide significant under Criteria A and C.

Under Criterion A it qualifies for its historic association with the Civilian Conservation Corp and the events occurring during the Great Depression of the period between 1933 and 1942. The property is a representative of the first infrastructure development projects that were implemented as part of the recovery and social aid programs executed by the Federal Government on the island during the 1930's. Under Criterion C it qualifies for been one of the early examples of the implementation of the Craftsman construction style by the Forest Service in Puerto Rico represented by the construction of the pool in 1936 and for been one of the first places of rural implementation of the International Style of architecture, represented by the reinforced concrete bathhouse built in 1938.

Originally built between 1935 and 1936 the recreation site was formed by the pool, a bamboo arched bridge where the current masonry bridge stands and a wooden bathhouse at the same location of the current concrete one (Figure 17). The site formed part of a larger developed recreation area created by the Civilian Conservation Corps, called *La Mina Recreation Area*. The purpose of the creation of the area was the opening of the forest reserve to public recreational use. The construction of the property started with the erection of the masonry dam on the eastern opening of the creek (Figure 18), which once completed created the pool impound area. Following that the flagstone walkways were completed along with two stepped platforms with five steps each which supported the original bamboo bridge.

The pool presented two masonry staircases for access (on the north and south side next to the bridge pillars) with dual tubing hand railing for each on the western side of the pool. An exit ladder with tubular rails was placed on the northeastern side of the pool, next to a jutting concrete platform supported by two square columns that extended all the way to the bed of the creek. Over this platform an 8 feet high diving platform in the shape of a wooden scaffold was erected. Original plans for the platform were included in the *La Mina Recreation Area Accomplishments report* (1936). A safety rope extended along the pool's edge held in place by metal rings, most of which remain in place to this day. Wooden benches were placed along the walkway.



Figure 17. 1936 Baño Grande postcard detail showing the original layout and features of the property (EYNF Heritage Program Records).



Figure 18. Construction of Baño Grande dam (1936) (EYNF Heritage Program Records).

A timber and mountain palm board rectangular bathhouse with a corrugated steel side-gabled roof was added to the ensemble and inaugurated in 1936 (Figure 19). The bathhouse was erected over a poured concrete pad. It was a simple rectangular, post and lintel structure with five log columns distributing the façade into four equal bays (Santiago-Cazul, 1998). Each bay was in-filled with horizontal wooden logs (palm wood) and each window opening with two panels of horizontal wooden louvers. Probably because of poor results with wood, the bridge and original bathhouse were replaced in 1938 by the currently existing concrete structures (Walker et al., 1999).



Figure 19. View of wooden bathhouse (Gerhart, 1936).

Historical plans for the bridge dated October 8, 1937 and signed by R.E. Pidgeon (Regional Engineer for the Forest Service) showed the intended bridge design (Figure 20). The design called for an elliptical-arch bridge made of reinforce concrete with solid rails flagged by stone. Two pillars faced with flagstones and with a height of 5 feet marked the entrance points of the bridge at each end. An upward-sweeping stairway with stone-faced newel posts accessed the bridge from the north side, while the south presented a smaller set of steps (Santiago-Cazul, 1998). The bridge construction took place on 1938 (Figure 21), but it was not constructed exactly according to plans. The final product which is the currently existing bridge was made with a lower arch than the one proposed by the original blueprint, and with smaller flights of steps on each side.

After the completion of the bridge, the original wooden bathhouse was replaced by the building of a reinforced concrete one following the upcoming International architectural style (Figure 22). The building, designed by Forest Service Engineer H. Randolph, stood in stark contrast to the rustic design of the pool due to its modernism. The design broke with the “integrated with nature” aesthetic design originally intended during the creation of **Baño Grande** in 1935-1936. The use of the new style responded to the construction tendencies that were been put in place during the emergency relief programs of the era such as the PRRA (see eligibility discussion for details). By August 1938 the construction of the bathhouse was well on the way as attested by the photograph on Figure 23.

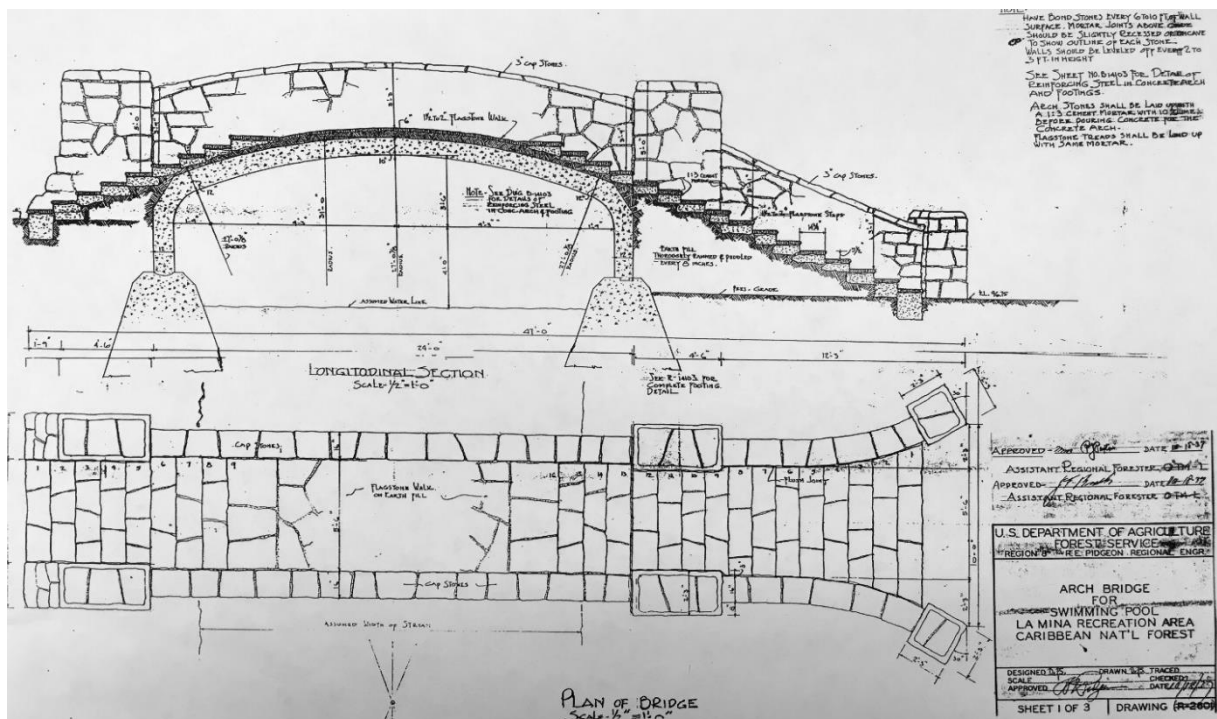


Figure 20. Original concrete bridge plans (1937) (EYNF Heritage Program Records).



Figure 21. Construction of concrete arch bridge (1938) (EYNF Heritage Program Records).

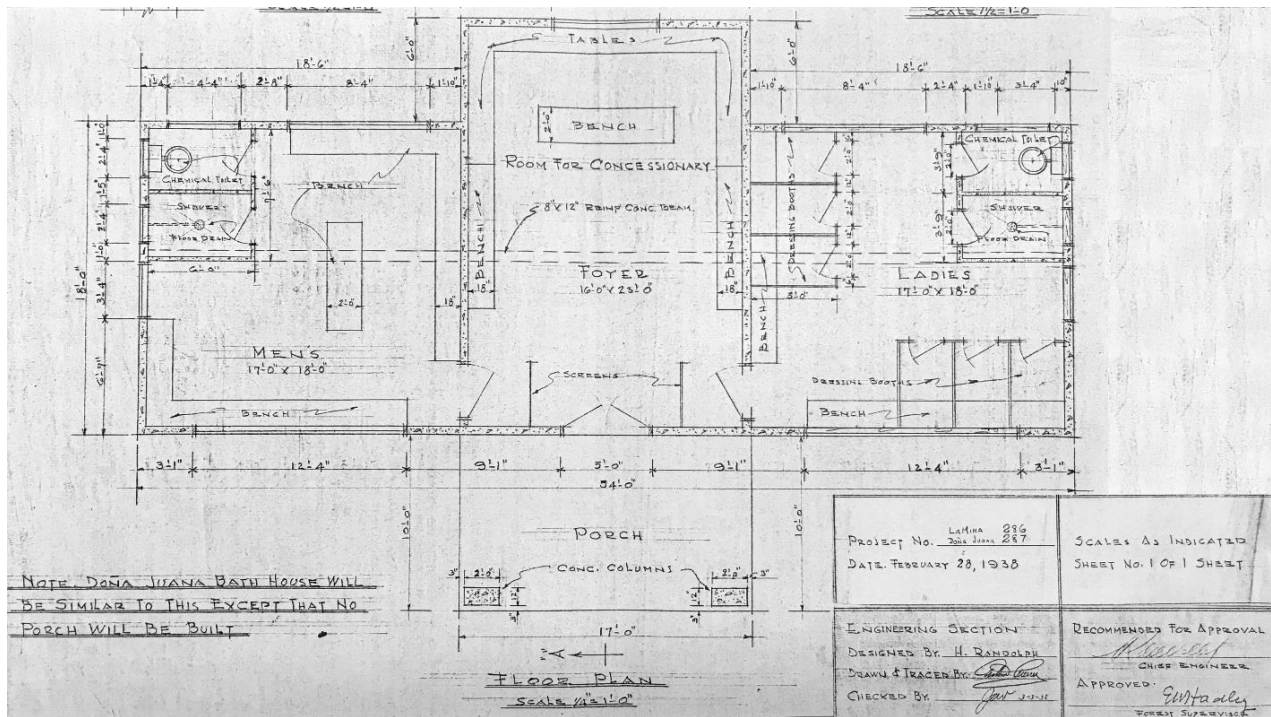


Figure 22. Concrete bathhouse plans (1938) (EYNF Heritage Program Records).



Figure 23. Construction of the concrete bathhouse (1938) (EYNF Heritage Program Records).

Figure 23 shows the building with the overall form it possesses today, sitting on the same concrete platform that supported the previous wooden bathhouse. The concrete bathhouse reflected the ghost of the wooden casting molds, with its board-widths and wood grain. The simple façade of the building was the same as of today, with the central entrance bay covered by the projecting flat roof portico. The central doorway had plain, concrete surround moldings and house board and batten double doors with small hatch windows. The horizontal window openings each housed a series of four contiguous fixed-louver wooden windows, each one with two panes of fixed louvers. Each pane of louvers consisted of seven fixed louvers and a water-guard at the bottom (Santiago-Cazul, 1998). No interior photographs of the finished structure have come to light so far, but the original 1938 construction included the use of 8”x 8” striated green concrete tile floors which were of common use at the time and which are still in place and in good condition (Figure 24).

By the mid 1940’s a pool side diving board had been installed (Figure 25). The same photograph shows the sharp contrast between the whitewashed bathhouse and the surrounding natural environment. By the late 1940’s to early 1950’s the handrail on the bathhouse stair had been installed (Figure 28). In 1955 the Caribbean National Forest was designated as the Luquillo Experimental Forest. As result the Forest Service administration was to focus solely on scientific research and all other operations were delegated to contractors and the state government (Wadsworth, 1964). As part of those policies the facilities at La Mina Recreation Area (including the pool) were put under a thirty year term special use permit to the Commonwealth Public Parks and Recreation Administration (PPRA) (Forest Service, 1961).



Figure 24. Original tiles behind the bathhouse entrance doorway.



Figure 25. View of Baño Grande in the mid 1940's (EYNF Heritage Program Records).



Figure 26. View of Baño Grande in the 1950's (EYNF Heritage Program Records).

By the early 1960's the wooden benches around the pool had been replaced with concrete ones. Photographs taken in the early to mid-1960's (Figures 27) show that the bathhouse had been painted a dark color, possibly green or dark brown. A lifeguard elevated chair, made of tubular metal, had been installed on the south side of the pool near the retaining wall. In 1968, the operation of La Mina reverted to the Forest Service after the PPRA consistently failed to meet Forest Service recreation program standards for the operation of the recreation area during the previous decade (Hill, 1967; Hofeldt, 1968). The actual closing date of the pool is not very clear, but from internal memos of the agency still on record, it appears that the site ceased operations as a recreation pool

in 1968. The records indicate that the site was closed down due to safety concerns (“rowdy crowds”), unauthorized uses outside operation hours, Forest Service liability due to lack of insurance following the drowning of nine bathers in the previous decade (Hofeldt, 1968). It was then decided to use the site as a scenic spot instead. This action had been considered by the agency since 1963 according to internal agency memorandums (Wize, 1966).

By the 1970s the dive board, dive platform, safety rope and steps and ladders used for accessing the pool had been removed, following the closing the pool for swimming around 1968. In their place a concrete and metal tube railing around the poolside as had been suggested by Wadsworth in the mid 1960’s. Even after the use of the pool was discontinued, the bathhouse building continued to serve as public restrooms. The internal green tiles, relatively modern fixtures and the replacement of the louver windows for glass blocks (Figure 28) probably date to this period of use during the 1970’s. No documentation related to the implementation of those alterations could be traced during the research for this nomination. The bathhouse continued in use as restrooms facility until the early 1980’s when it was boarded up.

The site continues to be used as a scenic area until the current date. Baño Grande is one of two New Deal era pools in El Yunque which were determined to be eligible for inclusion in the National Register in 1988. The second pool, Baño de Oro (which is also not in use) is been considered for nomination. The *Strategic Plan for the New Deal Era Historic Properties on the Caribbean National Forest* (Walker et al, 1999) studied the Baño Grande property and proposed that it could be refurbished for utilizing the bathhouse as a concessionaire for food vending. Similar policy is been proposed as part of the 2016 Forest Plan been drafted under the new 2012 Forest Service Planning Rule (USDA, 2012). In the meantime the site is cleaned once a year, including draining the pool and removing the debris, as well as removing graffiti and washing of the features.



Figure 27. View of Baño Grande in the early 1960’s (EYNF Heritage Program Records).

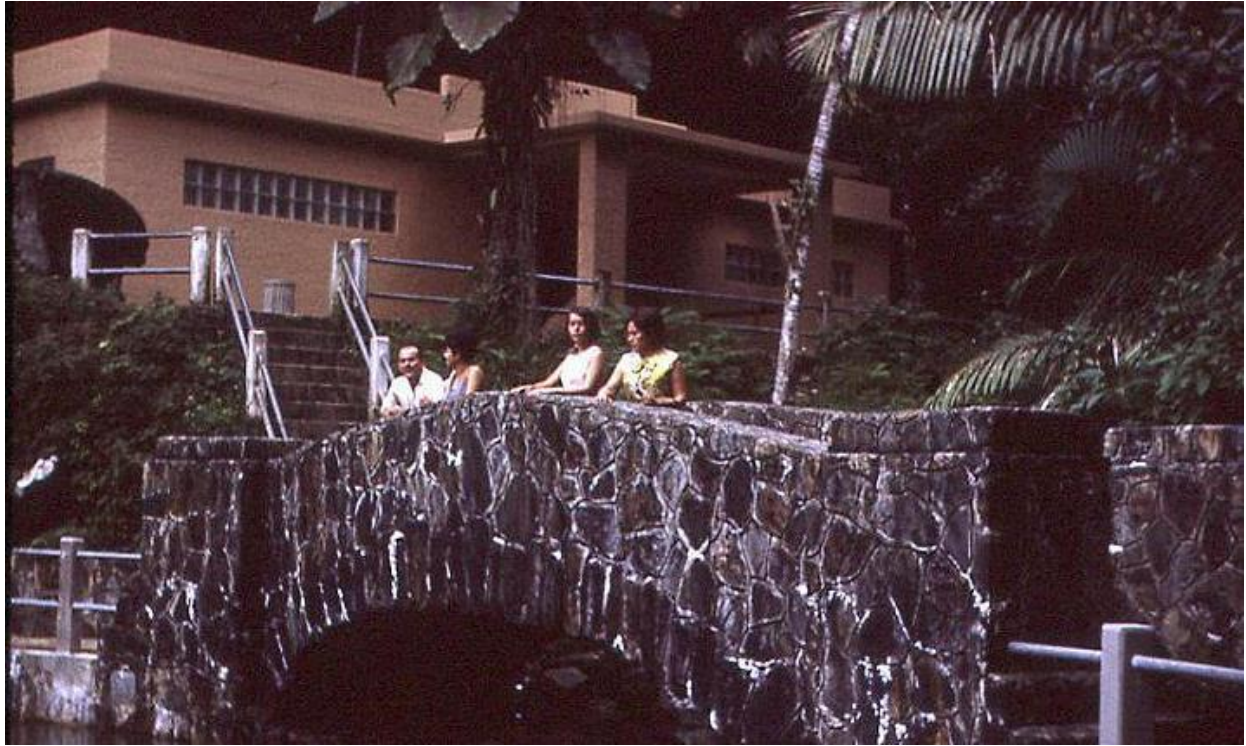


Figure 28. View of the bathhouse in the early 1970's (specific year unknown; provided by Hernan Bustelo).

As it stands today **Baño Grande** is one of the most pristine examples of construction directly linked to the social, economic and political events that influenced the execution of the “New Deal” era programs in El Yunque. It stands as a witness to the development of new mentalities and practices in Puerto Rican society, chief of all the modern concept of recreation. **Baño Grande** is also one of the earliest examples of the transplant of the Federal Government use of the Craftsman/Rustic style of architecture to Puerto Rico. The bathhouse also constitutes one of the earliest examples of the use of the International architectural style by the Federal Government on the island. As such Baño Grande is one of only two properties in the forest which present the use of both the architectural styles in one property. The property retains integrity of location design, materials, workmanship and association. No significant damages or alterations have happened which could detract from its eligibility under criteria A and C for association to the CCC/“New Deal” historic period and architectural styles.

Narrative Statement of Significance

The historical significance of **Baño Grande** (Criterion A) is related to its association with the “New Deal” initiatives and the Civilian Conservation Corps work which opened up the forest reserves like El Yunque to previously impossible uses such as that of developed recreation. This developed recreation, as defined by the North American standards, was different to the usual recreational activities practices of the Puerto Ricans. From the “American” worldview recreation meant “... hiking, picnic, swimming, trout fishing and driving to natural areas” (Barnes, et al., 2007, p. 17).

This represented both a change in use of the forest lands and an introduction of new recreational opportunities to the islanders (ibid.). Most of those activities were not within the scope of what Puerto Ricans at the time considered recreational activities and sometimes were not even feasible due to the general poverty level in Puerto Rico (i.e. taking a scenic drive through the forest). Nevertheless, the new connectivity afforded by the communication networks through the forest led to the creation of recreational infrastructure such as lodges, cabins, pools, scenic points and parking areas to support public visitation.

The actual placement of La Mina Recreation Area where **Baño Grande** exists, owes its existence to the vision of Assistant Forester George A. Gerhart and Forest Supervisor William Barbour. They recognized the potential of the area of the former La Mina CCC camp to be developed for recreation purposes. As stated on the 1936 La Mina Recreational Area Accomplishments and Proposed Recreational Developments report:

“... people have come to realize that forest recreation has a definitive value in their lives ... and so they desire to plan for the preservation of its possibilities.”
(Gerhart, 1936, p.6).

Under that scope the development of La Mina infrastructure such as **Baño Grande** not only related to the construction period during the New Deal Era, but continued to be significant feature in establishing Puerto Rico as a tourism destination. **Baño Grande** represents one of the most significant recreational offerings at El Yunque National Forest. The pool was the second pool constructed in El Yunque. It was preceded by the construction of Baño de Oro (circa 1935), located a few hundred meters to the south. Baño de Oro was built to provide a swimming area to visitors to the La Mina Recreation Area. That spot promptly proved to be too small to accommodate the recreational demand. For that reason **Baño Grande** was constructed to be three times the size of Baño de Oro (Gerhart, 1936).

The location of the pools was intentionally chosen to provide easy access to the public, who could reach the pools via the newly constructed road PR-191. In tandem both pools would provide ample

bathing space for La Mina Recreational Area guests escaping from the lowland high temperatures (Gerhart, 1836, p.9).

In such an expectation we can read the desire of the CCC era planners to have the National Forest become a hub for relaxation and fun, besides the stereotypical, mission oriented timber extraction common to the Forest Service. The development of the concepts and practices of recreation after the American invasion, (such as that of use of swimming pools) responds to the North American influences, their introduction and transfer from their American perspectives of what constituted recreation. As early as 1907 official policy of the Forest Service written in the “*The Use of National Forests*” book acknowledge the use of the forest as playgrounds for the people (Williams, 2000). It is then, with the arrival of the “Americans” that nature and the National Forest in Puerto Rico started to be portrayed as a place where to go for enjoyment and relaxation, a place to escape into nature.

It is true that people in the Puerto Rico have been recreating and using natural swimming pools since prehistoric times. But the modification of natural settings with the construction of predetermined infrastructure to create a suitable and proper space for swimming could be regarded as an American transplant to the island. It should be noted that such constructions in the first half of the 20th century were not commonplace on the island. Mostly they were present in places where American influences over the use, development or creation of carefully delimited recreation spaces existed. The work of “Las Tres C” on the island generated a new image of El Yunque through the recreational reconstruction of the forest (Valdes-Pizzini et al., 2011). **Baño Grande** is one of only two remaining examples of the transplant of those views by the direct actions of the Forest Service in Puerto Rico via the CCC program in El Yunque National Forest.

The influences of the policies developed and implemented during the “New Deal”, thanks to the direct intervention of the Forest Service and the CCC, helped redefine the value of nature and the forest on the Puerto Rican psyche. The forest was constructed and presented as a civilized nature where the juxtaposed opposites of cultural and natural could coexist (Pabón-Charneco, 2010). During that period of hard times the forest started to be portrayed as an escape, a natural refuge from the daily sufferings of the epoch. The development of such architecture allowed the public visiting El Yunque to experience a sort of pristine nature different from the rural, manmade farming landscapes more common throughout the island.

The CCC architecture can be regarded as an important contribution to public welfare. That architecture enabled enduring changes in the quality of life of the Puerto Ricans, and allowed the development of the mentality of nature appreciation. The construction of facilities such as **Baño Grande** thus were not only instrumental in providing unemployed men with work, but also in developing new views. Such construction projects facilitated a new innovative way of relating to nature (ibid.) which led to our current perspective of nature enjoyment and conservation. Those influences were very significant in Puerto Rico; so much so that in the public’s view El Yunque

reclaimed the semi sacred aura, which many claim existed in pre-columbian times. The forest started then to be perceived as a sacred place, not as the realm of the supernatural (as allegedly in prehistoric times), but as a place for the protection, conservation and enjoyment of nature.

Also of historical importance (in the pragmatic sense) were the influences of the creation of the pool infrastructure in later mid-20th century history and architecture of the island. The experiences acquired by the local men during construction works such as those of **Baño Grande** signified the acquisition of new skills and knowledge which were instrumental during the implementation of the “New Deal” relief efforts outside the forest reserve. The creation of affordable concrete housing by the PRRA had its experimental station in CCC projects like those of El Yunque. Beyond the PRRA / CCC era, such skills and knowledge provided by the “New Deal” programs was instrumental in the development of the industrialized post-war economy and the resulting urbanization of the island. The architectural influences are described in the following section.

Baño Grande is also significant for its design and architecture (Criterion C), which represent two periods of construction with two distinctive styles, all of which evolved in the period between 1934 and 1938. The coexistence of the two styles is the result of the evolution of the CCC era work and plans adapting to the local realities and conditions of Puerto Rico. As such **Baño Grande** presents two very contrasting styles on a single property. The first of the construction “periods” is represented by the introduction of the Craftsman style or Rustic architecture to the island. That style arrived to El Yunque as a generic transplant of standardized building plans from the mainland Forest Service.

All initial constructions which the CCC created in Puerto Rico up to 1937-1938 were representative of that Craftsman style or some local variation of it. Variability from the original Forest Service CCC standard plans was a common practice in the agency given that each Region undertook to design buildings appropriate to climatic characteristics utilizing the predominant native building materials (Anonymous cited in Barnes, et al., 2007, p.19). As outlined in the 1936 La Mina Recreational Area Report (Gerhart, 1936) most of the construction of the trails, shelters, and buildings were built using timber, palm boards, thatched roofs and local stone. Representative of that period is the first phase of construction of the pool. That first phase was intentionally built to blend with the landscape as to appear almost as a natural occurrence within the riverbed (Santiago-Cazul, 1998). This contrasted with the previous “squarer” design of Baño de Oro. The original pool was composed by the still in place stone masonry dam, stone walls, flagstone trail around the pool, stone drainages and stone staircases. The initial construction also presented a timber arched bridge where the current masonry and concrete bridge is located, as well as a timber bath house with sheet metal slanted roof and palm board siding.

The use of that architecture proved labor intensive, requiring the efforts of many men. All the stones used in the initial constructions had to be carried one by one on the backs of the CCC

enrollees from quarries at lower elevation (Walker et al., 1999). The use of local material also proved to be unreliable because timber quickly rotted in the wet tropical environment of Puerto Rico (Anonymous cited in Barnes, et al., 2007, p.19). For such reasons the wooden bridge and timber bath house were replaced by the existing masonry and reinforced concrete structures a couple of years later (1938). The construction of the stone and concrete bridge (which replaced the bamboo one) still evoked the aesthetics of the Craftsman style and kept in harmony with the pool setting. The creation of the new bath house structure completely departed from that line of estheticism. The new building broke the initial “in harmony with the natural landscape” philosophy in exchange for the survivability and robustness afforded by the use of the International style of architecture. That style proved a great adaptation to the local island conditions, and ensured the survivability of the buildings in the face of the tropical storms and hurricanes that so much destruction had caused to the island in 1928 and 1932. As such the implementation of that style can be seen as an adoption not on the merits of the angular and simplistic beauty of the style, but on the basis of a pragmatic architecture which afforded, robustness, survivability and low construction costs.

In tandem with the establishment of a concrete factory in 1936 on the island by the PRRA (Dietz, 2002), such characteristics lent to the use of the style by the relief program for the creation of inexpensive rural concrete housing. It is important to mention that the idea of developing concrete infrastructure on the island can be traced back to one of the principal postulates of the economic recovery plan outlined by Chardón in 1934 (Plan Chardón) (Scarano, 2016), as was the construction of the concrete factory which enabled it.

After World War 2 the style became ubiquitous on the island, having become the inspiration for the Puerto Rican Urbanization style which emerged (Jopling, 1988). As such it replaced the predominance of other styles such as the *Spanish Revival* style as the predominant architecture on the island, and remains so till this day in modified form. The concrete bathhouse at **Baño Grande** with its straight lines, flat roof, horizontal window courses and overall simple and cold surfaces (Santiago-Cazul, 1998) represent one of the rural early examples of this style which came to dominate the architectural landscape of the island for the next 80 years (Barnes, 2012). The construction of these buildings served as a “classroom” to instruct workmen in the application of reinforced concrete construction techniques, something that became instrumental in the subsequent development of public infrastructure on the island (Barnes, et al., 2007).

The training imparted to what later became the skilled craft tradesmen that developed the island infrastructure during the mid-20th century was the most enduring legacy of the economic recovery programs like the CCC and the PRERA on the island (Dietz, 2002). It is in this aspect that the historical value of the structure directly intersects its architectural significance. **Baño Grande** represents an embodiment of the development of those skills, techniques and styles which later greatly influenced the Puerto Rican architectural landscape and its late 20th century history.

9. Major Bibliographical References

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_____. 1937. *Arched Bridge for Swimming Pool, La Mina Recreation Area, Caribbean Nat'l Forest. Sheet 1 of 1*. Scale ¼ inch: 1 foot. Rio Grande; Forest Service

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_____. 1938. *Concrete Bath House La Mina Recreation Area. Sheet 1 of 3*. Scale ½ inch: 1 foot. Rio Grande; Forest Service.

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Previous documentation on file (NPS):

☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
☐ previously listed in the National Register
☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register
☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____
☐ recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

☐ State Historic Preservation Office
☐ Other State agency
☒ Federal agency
☐ Local government
☐ University
☐ Other
Name of repository: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

10. Geographical Data

Acres of Property _____ Less than one acre

UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

☐ NAD 1927 or ☒ NAD 1983

1. Zone: 20N Easting: 205538 Northing: 2025797

Verbal Boundary Description.

The boundary of this property is limited, to the north, and south by the forested banks of the unnamed creek, to the east by El Yunque Peak trail where the pool's access stairway starts, and to the west by the unmodified natural forest and unnamed creek beyond the arched bridge and bathhouse concrete pad foundation.

Boundary Justification.

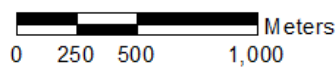
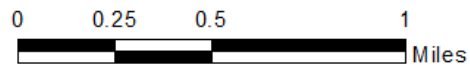
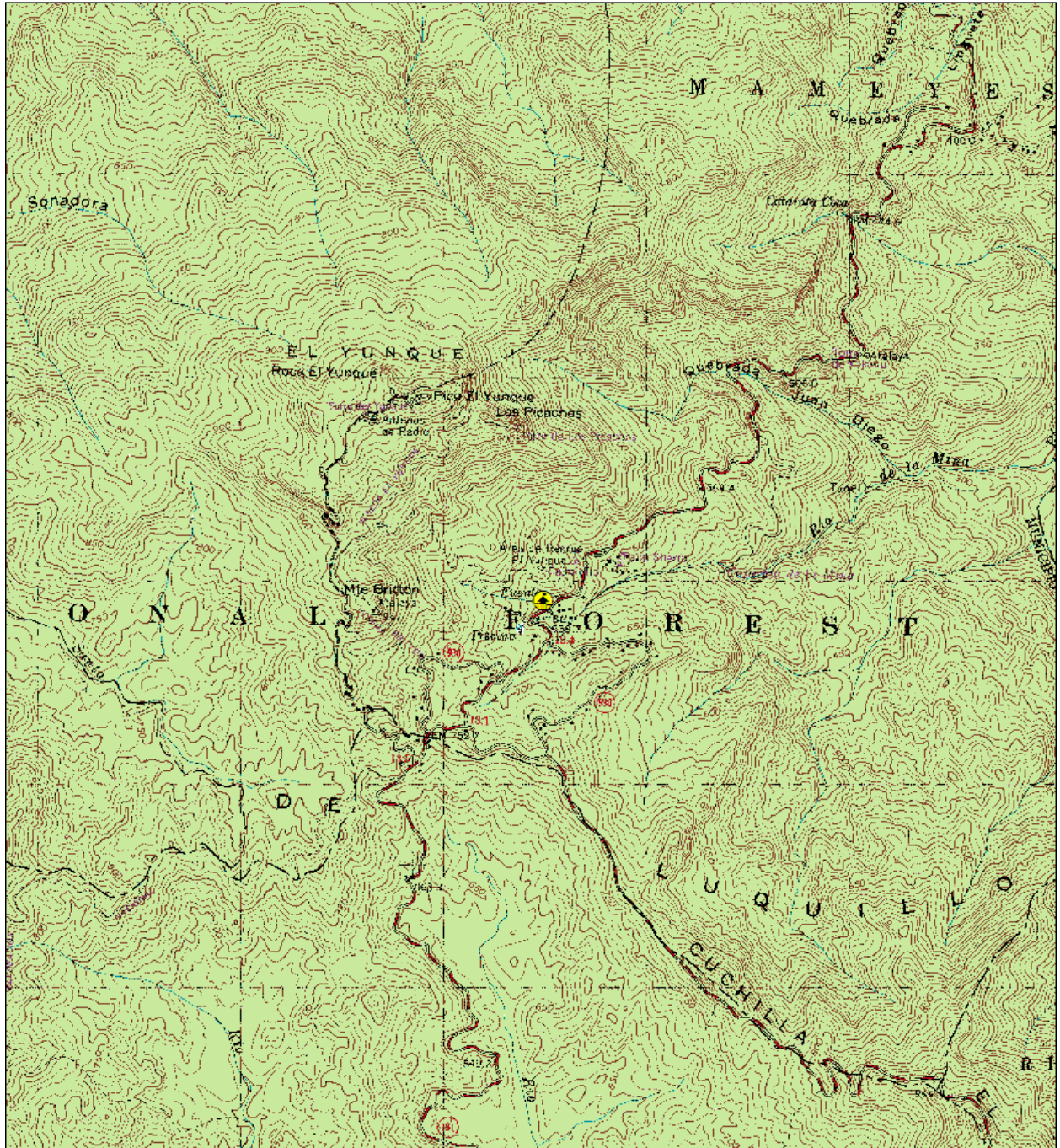
The property encompasses all of the resources (swimming pool, drainages, retaining walls, bridge, dam, and building) associated to Baño Grande and Bathhouse built by the Civilian Conservation Corps from 1936 to 1938.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Raymond Feliciano
organization: USDA Forest Service, El Yunque National Forest
street & number: Rd. 191, Int. 988, KM. 4.4, Bo. Barcelona,
city or town: Palmer state: PR zip code: 00721
e-mail rfeliciano02@fs.fed.us
telephone: 787-888-1880 ext. 5663
date: July 4, 2016

Additional Documentation

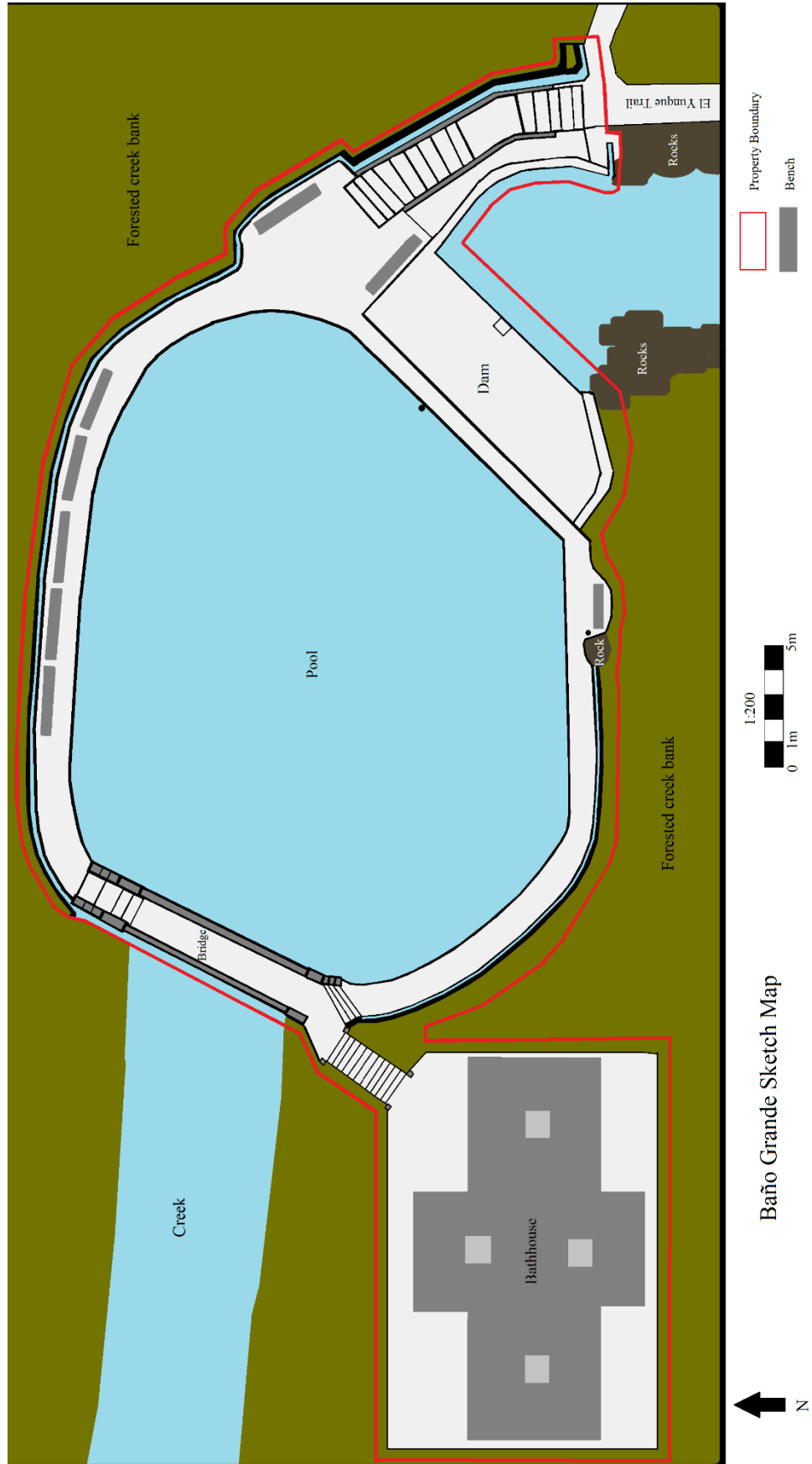
1. El Yunque Topographic Quadrangle 1:24,000- Showing the location of the property.
2. El Yunque Topographic Quadrangle 1:8,000- Showing the location of the property.
3. Sketch map of the property (to scale).



1:24,000



Baño Grande



Photographs

Photo Log



Name of Property: Baño Grande

City or Vicinity: Rio Grande

County: Rio Grande

State: PR

Photographer: Raymond Feliciano

Date Photographed: June 9, 2016

Location of Original Digital Files: El Yunque National Forest Headquarters. Rd. 191, Int, 988, KM. 4.4, Bo. Barcelona, Palmer, PR. 00721.

Description of Photograph: General View of Baño Grande (towards the southwest).

1 of 15.



Name of Property: Baño Grande

City or Vicinity: Rio Grande

County: Rio Grande

State: PR

Photographer: Raymond Feliciano

Date Photographed: June 9, 2016

Location of Original Digital Files: El Yunque National Forest Headquarters. Rd. 191, Int, 988, KM. 4.4, Bo. Barcelona, Palmer, PR. 00721.

Description of Photograph: View of Baño Grande dam (towards the west).

2 of 15.



Name of Property: Baño Grande

City or Vicinity: Rio Grande

County: Rio Grande

State: PR

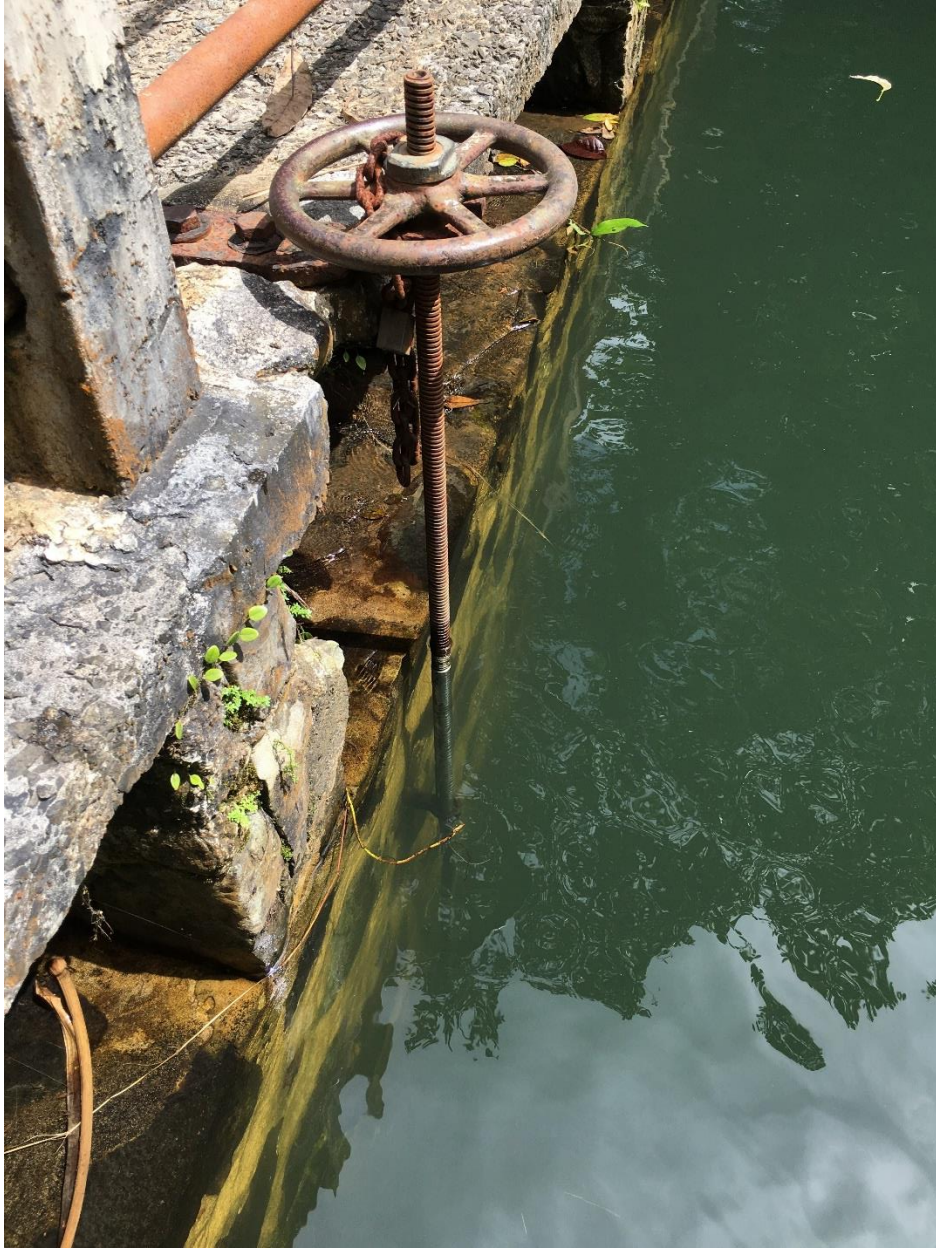
Photographer: Raymond Feliciano

Date Photographed: June 9, 2016

Location of Original Digital Files: El Yunque National Forest Headquarters. Rd. 191, Int, 988, KM. 4.4, Bo. Barcelona, Palmer, PR. 00721.

Description of Photograph: View of Baño Grande entrance area (towards the northeast).

3 of 15.



Name of Property: Baño Grande

City or Vicinity: Rio Grande

County: Rio Grande

State: PR

Photographer: Raymond Feliciano

Date Photographed: June 9, 2016

Location of Original Digital Files: El Yunque National Forest Headquarters. Rd. 191, Int, 988, KM. 4.4, Bo. Barcelona, Palmer, PR. 00721.

Description of Photograph: View of Baño Grande sluice gate valve dam (towards the southeast).

4 of 15.



Name of Property: Baño Grande

City or Vicinity: Rio Grande

County: Rio Grande

State: PR

Photographer: Raymond Feliciano

Date Photographed: June 9, 2016

Location of Original Digital Files: El Yunque National Forest Headquarters. Rd. 191, Int, 988, KM. 4.4, Bo. Barcelona, Palmer, PR. 00721.

Description of Photograph: View of original drinking fountain (towards the southwest).

5 of 15.



Name of Property: Baño Grande

City or Vicinity: Rio Grande

County: Rio Grande

State: PR

Photographer: Raymond Feliciano

Date Photographed: June 9, 2016

Location of Original Digital Files: El Yunque National Forest Headquarters. Rd. 191, Int, 988, KM. 4.4, Bo. Barcelona, Palmer, PR. 00721.

Description of Photograph: View of Baño Grande walkway over the dam (towards the east).

6 of 15.



Name of Property: Baño Grande

City or Vicinity: Rio Grande

County: Rio Grande

State: PR

Photographer: Raymond Feliciano

Date Photographed: July 5, 2016

Location of Original Digital Files: El Yunque National Forest Headquarters. Rd. 191, Int, 988, KM. 4.4, Bo. Barcelona, Palmer, PR. 00721.

Description of Photograph: View of arch bridge (towards the east).

7 of 15.



Name of Property: Baño Grande

City or Vicinity: Rio Grande

County: Rio Grande

State: PR

Photographer: Raymond Feliciano

Date Photographed: July 5, 2016

Location of Original Digital Files: El Yunque National Forest Headquarters. Rd. 191, Int, 988, KM. 4.4, Bo. Barcelona, Palmer, PR. 00721.

Description of Photograph: Staircase on eastern entrance of arched bridge (towards the southwest).

8 of 15.



Name of Property: Baño Grande

City or Vicinity: Rio Grande

County: Rio Grande

State: PR

Photographer: Raymond Feliciano

Date Photographed: July 5, 2016

Location of Original Digital Files: El Yunque National Forest Headquarters. Rd. 191, Int, 988, KM. 4.4, Bo. Barcelona, Palmer, PR. 00721.

Description of Photograph: View of western side staircase of arched bridge (towards the northeast).

9 of 15.



Name of Property: Baño Grande

City or Vicinity: Rio Grande

County: Rio Grande

State: PR

Photographer: Raymond Feliciano

Date Photographed: July 1, 2016

Location of Original Digital Files: El Yunque National Forest Headquarters. Rd. 191, Int, 988, KM. 4.4, Bo. Barcelona, Palmer, PR. 00721.

Description of Photograph: View of staircase leading to the bathhouse (towards the southwest).

10 of 15.



Name of Property: Baño Grande

City or Vicinity: Rio Grande

County: Rio Grande

State: PR

Photographer: Raymond Feliciano

Date Photographed: July 1, 2016

Location of Original Digital Files: El Yunque National Forest Headquarters. Rd. 191, Int, 988, KM. 4.4, Bo. Barcelona, Palmer, PR. 00721.

Description of Photograph: View of bathhouse façade (towards the southeast).

11 of 15.



Name of Property: Baño Grande

City or Vicinity: Rio Grande

County: Rio Grande

State: PR

Photographer: Raymond Feliciano

Date Photographed: July 1, 2016

Location of Original Digital Files: El Yunque National Forest Headquarters. Rd. 191, Int, 988, KM. 4.4, Bo. Barcelona, Palmer, PR. 00721.

Description of Photograph: View of bathhouse main façade entrance (towards the south).
12 of 15.



Name of Property: Baño Grande

City or Vicinity: Rio Grande

County: Rio Grande

State: PR

Photographer: Raymond Feliciano

Date Photographed: July 1, 2016

Location of Original Digital Files: El Yunque National Forest Headquarters. Rd. 191, Int, 988, KM. 4.4, Bo. Barcelona, Palmer, PR. 00721.

Description of Photograph: View of bathhouse eastern volume interior (males bathroom) (towards the southeast).

13 of 15.



Name of Property: Baño Grande

City or Vicinity: Rio Grande

County: Rio Grande

State: PR

Photographer: Raymond Feliciano

Date Photographed: July 1, 2016

Location of Original Digital Files: El Yunque National Forest Headquarters. Rd. 191, Int, 988, KM. 4.4, Bo. Barcelona, Palmer, PR. 00721.

Description of Photograph: View of bathhouse original tiles at the central volume of the building (towards the north).

14 of 15.



Name of Property: Baño Grande

City or Vicinity: Rio Grande

County: Rio Grande

State: PR

Photographer: Raymond Feliciano

Date Photographed: July 1, 2016

Location of Original Digital Files: El Yunque National Forest Headquarters. Rd. 191, Int, 988, KM. 4.4, Bo. Barcelona, Palmer, PR. 00721.

Description of Photograph: View of skylight opening at the ceiling of central volume (towards the south).

15 of 15.

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.